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HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE BUILDING-FUND

OF THE

Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, *Conn-*

TO THE

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE FUND.

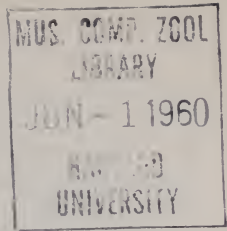
JANUARY, 1870.

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Gift of
Horace L. Furness,
of Philadelphia.
(A. 26 1854.)



REPORT.

At a meeting of the contributors to the building-fund of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, held January 12, 1869, in conformity to the academy's resolution of March 27, 1866, W. S.W. Ruschenberger, M. D., Joseph Leidy, M. D., William P. Wilstach, Frederick Graff, E. S. Whelen, John Welsh, Wm. S. Vaux, Thomas Sparks, Robert Bridges, M.D., George W. Tryon, Jr., Joseph Jeanes, John Rice and John S. Haines, were duly elected the Board of Trustees for 1869.

At a meeting of the Board, held Jan. 22, Dr. W. S. W. Ruschenberger was elected Chairman, Geo. W. Tryon, Jr., Secretary, and Wm. S. Vaux, Treasurer.

At a stated meeting, March 12, Mr. John Rice offered his resignation from the Board, which was accepted April 23d.

At the last annual meeting of the Board, a petition to the Legislature of Pennsylvania to occupy one of the Penn Squares as the site for a building to be erected for the academy was prepared, and a committee appointed to present it.

The petition is as follows :

HALL OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA, }
January 18th, 1869. }

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met :

The petition of the " Trustees of the building fund of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia " respectfully represents that, in soliciting your honorable bodies to grant to said trustees and their successors, with the consent of the Councils of the City of Philadelphia, privilege to erect upon one of the quarters or angles of Penn's square in said city a building adapted to the purpose and for the use of the said Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, reference is had to the intent of the donor of said square as expressed in his

own language, namely: "In the centre of the city is a square of ten acres; at each angle are to be houses for public affairs, as a meeting-house, assembly or State house, market-house, school-house and several other buildings for public concerns."

And the said trustees respectfully represent that the purposes for which said academy is organized and maintained are strictly investigatory and educational in their character; that, by the labors and contributions of its members and donations of individuals, continued through more than a half century, the said academy has acquired collections of natural objects more numerous and intrinsically valuable than those of any similar institution in the United States; and in like manner it has become possessed of a natural history library of more than twenty thousand volumes, which is maintained as a library for reference, and as such is freely at the service of all applicants. And the museum is opened to the public during two afternoons of every week—and has been during nearly a half century—without charge, or other impediments or restrictions than those necessary for the arrangement and preservation of the books and specimens, and that the average number of visitors to the museum on each public day is about one thousand. But from the crowded condition of the cabinets and the too restricted limits of the hall, these vast collections cannot be made to yield to the public as much information and gratification as they would be capable of imparting if displayed in adequate space.

The said trustees respectfully represent also that the said academy consists at present of about six hundred members, and that all persons of reputable character are eligible to membership; and it is the intent and desire of said academy that its useful course, in acquiring and freely diffusing knowledge of the natural sciences, hitherto pursued for more than half a century, shall be continued; and, with a view to afford visitors and students additional facilities to acquire knowledge, it purposes to erect a suitable and spacious building, wherein its materials and implements of study shall be properly arranged; and for the sake of the convenience of the public generally it is most desirable that the proposed building shall be located in a central part of the city.

And the said trustees of the building fund of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia furthermore represent, that through the liberality of citizens of Philadelphia who have appreciated the great importance of the academy to the community as an educational institution, a sum of over one hundred thousand dollars has been subscribed to its building fund; and they confidently believe that the one hundred and fifty thou-

sand dollars in addition necessary for construction can be in like manner obtained, provided that a satisfactory location for the building shall be secured.

And the said trustees, in consideration of the reasons and premises aforesaid, respectfully petition the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to grant them and their successors, the trustees of the building-fund of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, with the consent of the Councils of Philadelphia, the right and privilege to occupy permanently one of the quarters of Penn's square with a building adapted to the purposes and for the use of said Academy, under such provisions as the said Legislature in its wisdom shall deem necessary to secure to the public the advantages afforded by said Academy, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

W. S. W. RUSCHENBERGER,
Chairman.
 GEO. W. TRYON, JR., *Secretary.*
 WM. S. VAUX, *Treasurer.*
 JOSEPH LEIDY,
 WM. P. WILSTACH,
 FREDERICK GRAFF.

ED. S. WHELEN,
 JOHN WELSH,
 THOMAS SPARKS,
 ROBERT BRIDGES,
 JOSEPH JEANES,
 JOHN RICE,
 JOHN S. HAINES.

The committee reported April 23d that the petition to the Legislature had failed, and was discharged.

Drs. Ruschenberger, Bridges, Leidy and Mr. Tryon were then appointed "to prepare, in conjunction with the architect, a plan for an economical building," to be erected on the site at the S. W. corner of Nineteenth and Race streets.

The committee on plans and the architect agreed upon a rate of compensation for his services which was approved by the board of trustees, and an agreement was accordingly executed.

In September, Mr. Welsh communicated to the board that Mr. Henry C. Gibson generously proposed to give, as a site for the new building, a lot situated south of Walnut street, having a front of 88 feet on the west side of Twenty-second street, and extending westward 223 feet, containing 19,624 square feet.

This munificent offer the board declined to accept.

The lot at the corner of Nineteenth and Race streets, purchased for the academy, contains 48,528 square feet. It is in an improved and improving neighborhood. It is bounded by

three streets and is open on its west side, so that natural light is secure to it from all its exposures. It is believed to be not more than large enough to meet the wants of the institution during the next half century.

It is designed to erect upon the Race street side of this lot a wing of the proposed building for the accommodation of the present collections, leaving to our successors the task of its extension and completion. The wing will cover an area of 12,144 square feet. Although this might be placed on the lot offered by Mr. Gibson, the space left after it should be surrounded by contiguous structures would be insufficient to secure lateral light, which is essential for a lower story. There would be a space of only eleven feet on the north and south sides, and less than fifty feet on the west end of the proposed edifice. No considerable addition to it could be made to meet the prospective requirements of the institution. It is not considered expedient to locate the academy on a lot from which it would probably become necessary to move again within a quarter of a century, for want of space whereon to extend its building when needed.

The board is of opinion that, duly considering its size, location, neighborhood and advantages of light, no better site for the academy is procurable with the means at command. It is supposed that in the estimation of very many, if not a majority of the contributors to the building fund, a location on Broad street is preferable; but on that great highway no lot of dimensions sufficient for the present and future wants of the institution, and at the same time convenient to its working members, is procurable by the trustees.

For such reasons it is now believed to be expedient to commence building on Race street, as soon as it may be practicable without incurring the risk of pecuniary failure, unless by some fortunate chance a suitable lot on Broad street shall be presented, so as to enable the trustees to convert the lot in their possession into money for building. The sum which might be realized from the sale of this property, added to the money on hand, would be almost if not quite sufficient to realize or execute the approved plan of building if a site for it were pro-

vided without drawing from the fund, which has never been sufficient to defray the cost of both lot and the edifice to be erected, as will be presently shown.

At the meeting of the board in November, the plans of building, which have been carefully considered, were approved. The committee on plans was discharged, and its members were elected a building committee.

It is estimated that the cost of erecting the designed wing will be \$122,500, and that of this amount \$92,700 will be required to put the building under roof. The edifice is to be fire-proof and the external walls are to be constructed of serpentine rock and trimmed with Cleveland stone.

The treasurer's report shows that since November, 1868, only one hundred dollars additional contribution have been received; that after paying taxes for the year 1869, and sundry contingent expenses, the building-fund on hand, November 30, is \$31,284.68; that the aggregate of contributions remaining unpaid is \$15,175, making the total fund at the most \$46,459.68. A part of these contributions are payable in materials, and of course cannot be asked for until they are needed. It is estimated, therefore, that about \$44,000 are or will be available during the year 1870, if the work is begun.

It will be perceived that the amount of money actually on hand is equal to about only one-third of the sum estimated to be necessary to erect the walls and cover the building with its roof, including iron beams for fire-proof floor, window frames, &c.

Supposing the estimates to be accurate, an addition of say \$65,000 to the fund on hand will be needed to construct the building so far as to render it secure against damage from weather. And after this has been accomplished, \$30,000 more will be required to complete the fire-proof floors and other interior work. Then \$20,000 more will be probably necessary to supply cases and museum furniture in addition to what the academy has, and to defray the expense of moving the collections before the institution can be established in new quarters.

Can the board of trustees rely upon our fellow-citizens to

contribute say, \$115,000 to complete the enterprise it has in charge?

The number of visitors to the museum is a fair indication of the popularity and usefulness of the institution, even with its restricted space for the display of its treasures. During the year 1869, although it was closed during six weeks in mid-summer, the museum of the academy was visited by 95,756 persons. A receptacle for contributions to the building fund was in sight of all of them. Its aggregate receipts for the year were \$15.02, or on an average of a fraction less than one cent for every 64 visitors.

But it is a satisfaction to conjecture that every visitor carried away from the museum matter for his future thought and some addition to his information. The value of knowledge diffused in this pleasant way cannot be stated in pecuniary signs, nor estimated by the amount of money poor or ignorant people voluntarily give for it. The generous and wise are always willing to help in diffusing knowledge among the people. They know it is of priceless worth in the community; and they feel too that whoever contributes means towards imparting knowledge to his fellow-men assists in giving them a source of happiness and thrift. Considerations of this nature encourage the trustees to hope that their labors to establish the academy in a new location, and so add to its capacity for usefulness, will not be permitted to languish or remain long incomplete for lack of adequate means. The reputation of our citizens for generosity in aid of all laudable enterprises devised to benefit society and advance civilization suggests that, recognizing the natural sciences as a part of mental culture and the academy as a teaching agency in this respect unsurpassed in this country, they will extend to it the assistance now required. The fame of the city as a seat of learning and culture may be influenced to some extent by the time occupied in the completion of this enterprise.

The whole subject is respectfully submitted to the contributors.

W. S. W. RUSCHENBERGER,
Chairman of the board of trustees of the building-fund.

